

TWO SLEIGHS
AND A MAIDEN

BY HELEN WOOD

Copyright, 1904, by T. C. McClure

Joel Herrick drove along disconsolately in the moonlight, flicking his whip about Bay Charley's ears. Behind the yarn muffler his face wore an expression of disappointment and wounded pride, and it was evident that the five miles of fine sleighing before him on this keen, beautiful night held no charms. Disconsolate he looked and disconsolate he felt, for had he not just been scorned by the lady of his heart?

Little had he thought when he drove Susannah Peters out to Johnson's golden wedding that she would desert him, and for his bitterest rival, Ed Sparks, and yet—

Joel had danced often with the pretty, golden-haired Susannah. She, happily conscious of her new blue ribbons and pink cheeks, had beamed upon him, dancing his heart quite out of him and himself into the brave resolve to speak of his love on the homeward drive, for, although Joel had "kept company" with Susannah for six months, he had always lacked the courage to "ask her" point blank.

Now, Ed Sparks, on the other hand, lacked not the courage, but rather had pressed his suit, even when Susannah had clearly snubbed him. Perhaps it was done only to nettle the hesitating Joel; perhaps Susannah was really impressed by Ed's brand new suit of store clothes, scarlet tie and glittering cuff-buttons-and studs. At any rate, when the dancing was done and the big dining room was thrown open it was Ed Sparks who stepped quickly forward and "handed" Susannah to the delectable feast, and it was Ed Sparks who filled her glass with Aunt Marcy Johnson's best blackberry wine when the health of host and hostess was drunk. And all the while Joel Herrick, his heart eaten out with jealousy, tried to look gay as he served another and less favored dame.

After supper goodbyes were said, the stone bottles were filled with hot water in anticipation of long rides through the cold night, the women bade each other up in tippet and shawl, while the men harnessed the horses. To be sure, Joel had but one horse to harness, yet the crafty Ed managed to reach the house door first with his prancing young horses and a new, fancy sleigh. Susannah gave one swift glance from Ed's dashing turnout to staid Bay Charley and the old fashioned cutter. Vaguely she heard a chorus of feminine "oh's" and "ah's," and Joel's fate was sealed. She sprang into Ed's sleigh, the envy of every other girl on the great porch.

All this furnished anything but pleasant thoughts for Joel as he drove home alone, and when he realized that at this moment Ed's arm might be encircling the slender waist of Susannah he fairly groaned in spirit. Perhaps the bold fellow might even dare to kiss her. Joel grasped his whip tightly, and Bay Charley sprang forward in surprise.

Two miles had been covered, and he reached a point where the road wound through a patch of woodland. The trees stood gaunt, strange and black against the dazzling snow. Now and then a branch snapped with the cold, sounding like the report of a pistol on the still moonlight. Joel commenced to whistle from sheer loneliness. Then suddenly the sound died on his lips. In astonishment he saw a woman walking toward him. Nearer and nearer they came together. More and more familiar became the outlines of that feminine figure. As he slowed up it shrank back against a tree.

"Why, Susannah!"

"Oh, Joel, I'm so glad it's you!"

There were tears in her voice. But Joel remembered the slights, the humiliation recently put upon him, and hardened his heart and his voice.

"Well, Miss Peters, if you are goin' home alone I shall be pleased to take you under my care."

His tone was not inviting, but the shivering Susannah quickly climbed to his side. Joel touched up Bay Charley, but for some time remained silent. Now and then he glanced at the little figure crouched at his side, shaking with sobs and cold together. Joel's heart reproached him, and he finally remarked:

"Seems to me you ain't actin' right tonight. First you take up with a no account sort of fellow like Ed Sparks; then you go walkin' alone at this time of night. Where's Ed, an' what does he mean, leavin' you all alone like this? If he ain't treated you right, I'll take him out an' horsewhip him."

Susannah laid her hand appealingly on Joel's arm.

"I've been mean to yop, Joel, but—but this ain't Ed's fault. I—I fell out!"

Joel snorted incredulously.

"Yes, I did, too, Joel. We were just above old man Judkin's place, an' one of those big wild geese was lyin' in the road, we not seen it because of its bein' all white. It just took an' flew right up in the horses' faces. They're spry, you know, an' won't stand much, 'Ed' ain't a driver like you. He ain't strong. They ran like wild, an' he had to stand up to hold 'em—'An' when we turned the corner by the old apple tree the sleigh went into a post, toppled over an'—I fell out. An' when I got up I saw the sleigh swingin' from side to side an' Ed standin' up on 'em hangin' on to the reins."

Her recital came to a sudden and un-signified end as she giggled at the recollection of her admirer's plight.

She tried to smother the giggle in the sleeve of Joel's great rough coat and then continued:

"There hasn't been a soul along until you came. I was scared to death. Everything was so white an' still, an' in the woods the moon was lookin' at me through the dark branches of the trees for all the world like a queer face. I—I don't believe I could have stood it much longer."

By this time Joel was chuckling over his rival's predicament, and Susannah sat up in sudden dismay.

"But you won't tell anybody, will you, Joel? The whole town'll be lauging at me."

Joel turned serious on the instant.

"No, they won't laugh at you. If they do, they'll have to answer to me. Besides, the joke ain't on you. It's on Ed."

But just at this time Ed was having fresh troubles of his own. Careening, swaying; he drew near Hufflesburg at a racing gait, utterly unconscious that Susannah was no longer clinging to the seat before which he still stood, tugging at the reins. Occasionally he threw an encouraging word over his shoulder or told her how brave she was not to scream and add to their danger. The horses would soon run themselves out, and the road before them was clear.

But, alas, just as he turned into the town a sudden obstacle appeared in their track—Farmer Schneider's big sleigh, laden with the rosy-cheeked Mrs. Schneider and three equally rosy daughters! At Ed's warning shout Schneider drew his placid white mare to one side, but the flying team caught the rear of Schneider's sleigh, and a chorus of feminine shrieks was wafted to the fleeing Ed. The drift was deep, and the five Schneiders, when disentangled, found themselves unjured, but nevertheless wrathful at the reckless driver.

In the meantime Ed had reached the center of the town, and his horses, exhausted and steaming, finally responded to the rein. With a feeling of intense relief Ed turned to his companion. Consternation seized him. Where was Susannah? Caught in the maelstrom of Schneiders? No, his cutter had not been injured in the collision. He remembered with horror that she had not spoken since the horses first began their mad run. What if she had been back there in the woods all this time, frozen, perhaps attacked by tramps? Ed was too frightened to be logical. With a curse he turned his fagged horses back into the road and whipped them on at a mad gait. Again he passed the Schneider family, and as the farmer once more pulled out of his way, this time more successfully, his goodwife murmured:

"I don't think Marcy Johnson's wife was so strong as that."

Half a mile farther he met Joel and stopped at the latter's vigorous hail.

"Good evenin', Ed," said Joel, with a cheerful smile for his discomfited rival. "Are you goin' to look for Susannah? She's here, safe in my sleigh, an' you can just be she ain't goin' to make such a mistake again."

Ed ignored the complacent Joel and, making his best bow—that is, the best he could make while trying to hold the two astonished and trembling horses said:

"I'm awful sorry I had such an accident, Miss Peters; but if you aren't hurt it don't matter so much, an' I hope you'll let me see you safe home."

"Yon see, Mr. Sparks—Mr. Herrick—I mean Joel—an' I—we—I'm just as much obliged!"

Joel took up her faltering explanation and made it clear.

"I don't mind tellin' you, Mr. Sparks, that hereafter Susannah an' I'll do our sleighin' together for all time, but if you want a recommendation to any other girl Susannah she'll give it, an' we won't mention this here little affair."

And Mr. Sparks, with a dignified up-lifting of his fur cap and a few unintelligible words, whipped up his horses, swung around in the road and raced back to town.

A Pleasant Interruption.

The following incident occurred at an entertainment in a large provincial town: On the programme a certain violinist was down to sing "The Miner's Dream of Home," and to add special effect to the song he, having a friend a fireman at the fire station, about three minutes' walk from the hall, ran out and borrowed his top boots.

His turn on the programme came around. He appeared on the stage in all the glory of a blonde, slouch hat, white breeches and the fireman's top boots. His rendering of the song was a great success up to the middle of the second verse, when a commotion was heard at the entrance of the hall. Then a hot and eager fireman forced his way through the audience up to the footlights and bawled out at the top of his voice:

"Bill, you've got to come out of them 'ere boots if you value your life. I'm called to a fire!"—London Tip-Bits.

Why Many Children Are One Sided.

It is a well known physiological law that the use of a muscle causes an increase in its size, while neglect causes it to become smaller.

The steady use of the same arm in carrying a set of books to and from school, the propping of one arm on a table, or the excessive use of one arm or leg and the disease of the other—each such habit slowly but surely brings about its own result unless constant effort be made to counteract it.

The growing age is more subject than any other to such influences, but every age is directly and powerfully influenced by any occupation or habit which tends to the exclusive exercise of certain muscles or to the habitual taking of a certain posture.

D. WM. H. VAN GIERSON,
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON.

No. 393 Franklin Street, opp. Washington Avenue,
Office Hours: 8 to 9 A. M., 1:30 to 2, and 7 to 8 P. M.
Telephone call Bloomfield 22.

D. F. G. SHAUL,
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON.

No. 70 Washington St., Bloomfield, N. J.
Office Hours: Until 9 A. M., 1:30 to 3 P. M.,
6:30 to 8 P. M.
Telephone No. 1-F.

S. C. HAMILTON, D. D. S.,
DENTIST.

No. 32 Broad Street, Bloomfield, N. J.
Telephone No. 68-1—Bloomfield.

D. W. F. HARRISON,
VETERINARY SURGEON.

Office and Residence:
329 Broad Street, Bloomfield, N. J.
Office Hours: 8 to 9:30 A. M., 8 to 8 P. M.
Telephone No. 107-a—Bloomfield.

C. HAS. H. HALFPENNY,
ATTORNEY & COUNSELLOR AT LAW.

Office: 500 BROAD STREET, NEWARK.
Residence, Lawrence Street, Bloomfield.
Frederick B. Pilch Henry G. Pilch.

PILCH & PILCH,
ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELLORS AT LAW.

22 CLINTON STREET, NEWARK, N. J.
Residence of F. B. Pilch, 78 Water Street, Newark.

H. ALSEY M. BARRETT,
ATTORNEY AND COUNSELLOR AT LAW.

Office, 750 Broad St., Newark.
Residence, Elm St., Bloomfield.

C. CHARLES F. KOCHER,
COUNSELLOR AT LAW.

NEW YORK: BLOOMFIELD,
Prudential Building, 285 Bloomfield Avenue.

W. M. DOUGLAS MOORE,
ATTORNEY AND COUNSELLOR AT LAW.

OFFICE: 149 Broadway, New York City.
Residence, 12 Austin Place, Bloomfield, N. J.

GALLAGHER & KIRKPATRICK,
LAW OFFICES,

165 Broad Street, Newark, N. J.
Jos. D. GALLAGHER, J. BAYARD KIRKPATRICK.
Residence of J. D. Gallagher, Ridgewood Ave., Glen Ridge.

J. F. CAPEN,
ARCHITECT.

Exchange Building, 45 Clinton Street, Newark.
Residence: 376 Franklin Street, Bloomfield.

DAVID P. LYALL,
PIANO-TUNER.

88 Monroe Place, Bloomfield, N. J.
LOCK BOX 144.

W. M. J. MAIER,
TEACHER OF VIOLIN AND PIANO.

Music furnished for Weddings, Receptions, etc.
47 FAIRMOUNT AVENUE,
Newark, N. J.

J. G. Keyler's Sons,
556 Bloomfield Ave., DEALERS IN

FURNITURE
Of Every Description.

Parlor and Chamber Suites, Bureaus, &c.

Also Oil Cloth, Carpet Lining, Matting, Mattresses and Spring Beds always on hand.

Upholstering and Repairing done with neatness.

Chemicals. Colors. Dyes.

INK
Used in Printing this Paper

IN MANUFACTURED BY

J. M. HURER

275 Water Street,
NEW YORK

INK
Used in Printing this Paper

IN MANUFACTURED BY

J. M. HURER

275 Water Street,
NEW YORK

INK
Used in Printing this Paper

IN MANUFACTURED BY

J. M. HURER

275 Water Street,
NEW YORK

INK
Used in Printing this Paper

IN MANUFACTURED BY

J. M. HURER

275 Water Street,
NEW YORK

INK
Used in Printing this Paper

IN MANUFACTURED BY

J. M. HURER

275 Water Street,
NEW YORK

INK
Used in Printing this Paper

IN MANUFACTURED BY

J. M. HURER

275 Water Street,
NEW YORK

INK
Used in Printing this Paper

IN MANUFACTURED BY

J. M. HURER

275 Water Street,
NEW YORK

INK
Used in Printing this Paper

IN MANUFACTURED BY

J. M. HURER

275 Water Street,
NEW YORK

INK
Used in Printing this Paper

IN MANUFACTURED BY

J. M. HURER

275 Water Street,
NEW YORK

INK
Used in Printing this Paper

IN MANUFACTURED BY

J. M. HURER

275 Water Street,
NEW YORK

INK
Used in Printing this Paper

IN MANUFACTURED BY

J. M. HURER